



BOOK BUDDIES

LIVE UNITED

2021 PROGRAM TOOLKIT

IMPACTING THE LIVES OF EARLY LEARNERS

The lack of quality learning experiences can limit a child's future potential, especially those who are most vulnerable — the children of **ALICE® (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)** and poverty-level families already struggling to afford the basics. By providing early literacy opportunities, we can help promote academic readiness. And when children show up ready to learn, it sets up a solid foundation for future success in both school and life.

You can help! By volunteering with United Way of Northern New Jersey as a Book Buddy, you can share your love of books and reading while making an impact in the lives of children throughout our region. The information provided in this toolkit will walk you through the entire process, from choosing an appropriate book to recording yourself reading it.

Recordings will then be made available to our nonprofit partners, local preschools, Head Start programs, family care providers, child care centers and ALICE families.

Volunteers of all ages can participate. Keep reading below to learn more!

HOW TO HELP

STEP 1: REGISTER

To participate, volunteers first need to register. To get started, [click here](#). You will be shown several pages with information and guidance, which is also included in this Toolkit. You can also sign our waiver form, which is explained in step four.



United Way
of Northern New Jersey

STEP 2: PICK A BOOK

Select a book that is an appropriate reading level for preschool to third-grade students. You can choose a book from home or a personal favorite online or buy one to read. Need help finding the perfect book? Check our Appendix for suggestions.

STEP 3: RECORD YOURSELF READING*

Recordings should be kept to about four minutes long. Rehearse beforehand to make sure your timing, audio, and lighting all work. **And be sure to record in landscape mode!** Check the Appendix for more detailed instructions and tips.

**United Way will accept recordings of children's books read in other languages. There is a particular need for stories read in Spanish. Please contact [Lisa Galonardo](#) to discuss submitting stories in multiple languages.*

STEP 4: COMPLETE OUR WAIVER FORM

Before a video can be shared, a signed media authorization and release form must be filled out for anyone who appears in the recording. If you didn't sign one when registering, please read and complete the waiver form that appears in the Appendix. Then, email it to Lisa.Galonardo@UnitedWayNNJ.org.

STEP 5: SUBMIT YOUR VIDEO

Before hitting send, be sure to review your video. Then save your video using one of the two naming conventions below.

- Volunteers associated with a participating company should save their videos as:
First initial_Last name_Date_Company Name_BB
- Volunteers not associated with a company should save their videos using:
First initial_Last name_Date_BB

You can send your video to United Way using [WeTransfer](#), a free filing sharing website. Videos should be emailed to Lisa.Galonardo@UnitedWayNNJ.org.

QUESTIONS?

For more information or questions about Book Buddies, email Lisa.Galonardo@UnitedWayNNJ.org or call 973.993.1160, 503.

INSPIRING OTHERS

You can also make a difference by spreading the word about Book Buddies. Encourage family, friends, and neighbors to get involved. Don't forget, many schools have volunteer requirements and are committed to helping their communities. This is a great way for older children to use their tech skills, share their favorite stories, and volunteer in a safe way.

In the Appendix, you'll find a flyer that you can use and customize to inspire others to join you in supporting this worthy endeavor.

Share any photos of you and your family or team participating as a Book Buddy with us! We'll post them and recognize volunteers for their efforts. Email photos to Lisa.Galonardo@UnitedWayNNJ.org.

You can also help get the word out about Book Buddies through social media. Use **#UnitedForALICE**, **#UnitedWayNNJReadingLibrary** and **#UnitedWayBookBuddies**, plus **#VarsityVolunteer** in your social media posts. Please be sure to tag and share!

Facebook: Facebook.com/unitedwaynnj, @UnitedWayNNJ

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UnitedWayNNJ>, @UnitedWayNNJ

LinkedIn: www.Linkedin.com/company/unitedwaynnj

Instagram: @UnitedWayNNJ

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

Along with Book Buddies, United Way of Northern New Jersey offers other ways you can make a difference in the community. You can [join us](#) in fighting for change for ALICE, [donate](#) to our cause, and [volunteer](#).

For more information about a volunteer experience tailored to meet your group or corporate needs, email [Lisa Galonardo](mailto:Lisa.Galonardo) or call 973.993.1160, x503.

APPENDIX 1: BOOK SUGGESTIONS

UNITED WAY PICKS

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin, Jr.

What Grows Underground? by Maria Fleming

I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato by Lauren Child

Dr. Seuss's Sleep Book by Dr. Seuss

The Tooth Book: A Guide to Healthy Teeth and Gums by Edward Miller

What's in the Piggy Bank? by Janet Craig

A Chair for my Mother by Vera B. Williams

Save, Spend, or Donate by Nancy Loewen

The Penny Pot by Stuart J. Murphy

Not Norman, by Kelly Bennett and Noah Z. Jones

Froggy Gets A Doggy, by Jonathan London and Frank Remkiewicz

The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss and Crockett Johnson

Lola Plants a Garden by Anna McQuinn and Rosalind Beardshaw

Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown and Felicia Bond

Spring Stinks by Ryan T. Higgins

BY TOPIC

Race and Ethnicity

Hair Love by Matthew A. Cherry

Social Justice

If Kids Ran the World by Diane Dillon and Leo Dillon

Immigration

Saffron Ice Cream by Rashin Kheiriyeh

Culture, Folktales, Religion, and Myths

The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet! by Carmen Agra Deedy

Binny's Diwali by Thrity Umrigar

Neurodiversity and Neurodivergence

My Brother Charlie by Holly Robinson Peete

Physical Disability

Happy Dreamer by Peter H. Reynolds

Mental Health

Maybe Tomorrow? by Charlotte Agell

BOOK LISTS

Time's 100 Best Children's Books: <https://time.com/100-best-childrens-books/>

Scholastic's Top List of Children's Books (organized by age range):
<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/100-greatest-books-kids.html>

BUYING LINKS

Scholastic: <https://www.scholastic.com/home/>

Amazon*: <https://smile.amazon.com/> (*Please select United Way of Northern New Jersey as your Smile recipient organization)

Barnes & Noble Bookstores: https://www.barnesandnoble.com/b/books/kids/_/N-29Z8q8Ztu1

APPENDIX 2: RECORDING TIPS AND INSTRUCTIONS

BEFORE RECORDING

Practice. Read through the book before you start recording to make sure you are confident and within the four-minute time limit.

Lighting. If possible, find a blank wall to use as your background. Don't have too much light coming from behind you. Illuminate your face as much as possible using a lamp or another source of light. If you're near a window, put the camera between you and the window.

Sound. Avoid any background noise when you film to keep the sound quality as clear as possible. Be sure to test the video's sound before submitting.

Equipment and Filming.

Smartphone or tablet instructions:

1. In Settings, check that your camera is in the highest definition possible.
2. Put phone on airplane or do not disturb mode to avoid any unexpected interruptions.
3. Open up the camera app and choose the video option at the bottom.
4. Use landscape mode when recording.
5. Keep the phone as steady as possible when filming and look at the lens rather than the screen.

PC or Mac instructions:

1. Use the search box to find the camera application.
 2. If this is the first time using this program, you may need to give the app some permissions.
 3. Click on the video icon. Then click the video icon again to start recording.
 4. Your video will be saved to your camera roll, which can be accessed by clicking the small thumbnail image in the bottom right corner of your screen.
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WHEN FILMING

Be mindful of how you hold the book. Make sure that someone watching the video will be able to see all illustrations.

Introduce yourself. Before you begin reading, consider following the below sample script:

“Hi, my name is _____ (first name only), and I work for/am with _____ (company or group name) in partnership with United Way. Today, I will be reading you _____ (title of book) by _____ (author) and illustrated by _____ (illustrator). I am so excited to share this story with you. Let’s get started.”

Read with expression. Try to reflect the story’s tone and the characters’ personalities.

Props. If available, consider using props to really bring the story to life (i.e. hand puppets, stuffed animals).

Pacing. Allow time to think about what’s happening or what might come next.

Review. Watch the video at least one time to make sure that you are happy with the results and that the image and sound are clear. Feel free to re-record as many times as you would like before sending it in.

Have fun! Share your love of reading with the students and point out parts of the story that you noticed or especially liked. Doing so will encourage them to do the same.



APPENDIX 3: AUTHORIZATION & RELEASE PHOTOGRAPH, TELEVISION, TAPE, MOVIE AND/OR SOUND RECORDING

I, _____ (NAME—Please Print),
of _____ (Full Address)

hereby authorize and consent that United Way of Northern New Jersey, a not-for-profit corporation, its legal representatives, successors or assignees, corporate donor partners, and others shall have the absolute right to copyright, publish, use, sell or assign any and all photographic portraits or pictures, television spots, movie films, videotapes and/or sound recordings, or any part thereof, they have taken or made of me on this date or in which I may be included, name or other biographical data, in whole or in part, whether apart from or in connection with, illustrative or written printed matter, story or news item, motion pictures, internet usage, television or radio spots, or for publicity, advertising or any other lawful purpose whatsoever, in conjunction with my own or a fictitious name, or my real or fictitious biographical data, or in reproduction thereof in color or otherwise in any media now known or hereby created.

I hereby waive all claims for any compensation for such use or for damages other than as set forth herein.

I hereby waive any right that I may have to inspect and/or approve the finished product or the advertising copy that may be used in connection therewith or the use to which it may be applied. I acknowledge that there is no obligation to use any material authorized by me hereunder.

I hereby warrant that I am of full age and have every right to contract in my own name in the above regard. I state further that I have read the above authorization and release, prior to execution, and that I am fully familiar with the contents thereof.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: (IF SUBJECT IS A MINOR)

Project: Book Buddies

APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE FLYER FOR BOOK BUDDIES

IMPACTING THE LIVES OF EARLY LEARNERS

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

My name is _____ and I'd like to invite you and your family to help me ensure local children have access to an early literacy opportunity through United Way of Northern New Jersey. It's a safe way to volunteer your time and make a big impact in our community!

BOOK BUDDIES

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You can help! By joining me and volunteering with United Way of Northern New Jersey as a Book Buddy, we can share our love of books and reading while making an impact in the lives of children throughout our region.

HOW TO HELP

All you need to do is record yourself reading an age-appropriate children's book. I can provide you with a list of book recommendations as well as tips and instructions on how to record yourself reading.

Recordings will then be made available to our nonprofit partners, local preschools, Head Start programs, family care providers, child care centers and ALICE families. Volunteers of all ages can participate.

To learn more, please feel free to call or email me at: _____

Thank you for joining me in making a difference!